

between said inside and outside surfaces in a longitudinal half thereof nearest said neck, wherein at least a portion of said face, including said end piece, is vaulted outward from said planar rim by at least 2 mm., and wherein said face includes an area at a longitudinal end thereof remote from said neck which has a longitudinal length of approximately twice a longitudinal distance between said end piece and said remote longitudinal end of said face and which area is devoid of transverse ribs.

16. A lute as specified in claim 15 wherein said area of said face includes laths extending in a generally longitudinal direction and arranged symmetrically about said longitudinal centerline.

17. A lute according to claim 16 wherein said laths are arranged at acute angles with respect to said centerline.

18. A lute according to claim 16 wherein the laths are in a fan configuration having central axes intersect at an imaginary point on said centerline of the face.

19. A lute according to claim 16 wherein the laths run parallel to said centerline.

20. A lute according to claim 16 wherein an even number of laths is provided.

21. A lute according to claim 16 wherein an odd number of laths is provided.

22. A lute according to claim 15 wherein said face has a thickness which diminishes toward said rim at least in area devoid of transverse ribs.

23. A lute according to claim 15 wherein said transverse ribs have ends which rest on abutments.

24. A lute according to claim 16 wherein at least two of said laths extend below at least one transverse rib which lies closest to the rib-free area, wherein said at least one transverse rib comprises a tunnel-shaped recess through which said laths pass without contact between said laths and said transverse ribs.

25. A lute according to claim 16 wherein said neck includes a fingerboard having frets and wherein said fingerboard and said frets extend onto a segment of said.

26. A lute according to claim 25 wherein said face is reinforced on its inside with a piece of hardwood in the region of said face segment.

27. A lute according to claim 15 wherein eight strings (17) are strung, said strings being tuned C - D - E - A - d - g - h - e'.

28. A lute according to claim 15 wherein fifteen single strings are strung, said strings being tuned G - A - B - C - D - E - F - G - A - B - d - f - a - d' - f, or G - A - B - C - D - E - F - G - A - B - d - f - a - d' - g'.